

Message from The Bridge Board on Juneteenth

Dear Bridge Colleagues,

Happy Juneteenth, a special day on which we celebrate Black freedom and achievement. In years past, Bridge has not made any statement or acknowledgement of this important day, but recent events in our country are a stark reminder that we cannot passively ignore the reality of systemic racism in America. Part of real change begins with acknowledging its existence, having the conversation openly and taking real actions to promote diversity and equal opportunity and justice in America. To honor Juneteenth, we have committed to making June 19 a paid company holiday from 2021 onward.

Slavery persisted in the southern US after the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. In remote corners of the Confederacy, news of slavery's end did not come until more than two months after Robert E. Lee's reluctant surrender in April 1865. The day General Order No. 3 was finally delivered to the people of Galveston, Texas on June 19, 1865 is the day slavery finally ended in the Confederacy. Juneteenth commemorates this announcement. It is important to note that slavery was not fully abolished until the passage of the 13th amendment on December 6, 1865.

As we all know, the end of slavery did not mark the end of discrimination. Black people in America have had to overcome countless social injustices throughout history and continue to fight for equality today.

Juneteenth is important not just for Black Americans but for all Americans. As protests continue against racial injustice across our country and across the world, Juneteenth and the events leading up to freedom for all Americans must be understood and supported by all, so everyone can have the opportunity to live in a just society that does not discriminate on the basis of the color of your skin or any other differences.

Juneteenth is also a celebration of the many achievements of the Black community and the richness of African American heritage. On Juneteenth, many families get together to eat, dance, and celebrate their culture. They may also take this time to honor the history of their ancestors whose stories stretch back thousands of years to African civilizations.

We hope all will take time today, and in the future, to reflect on what we have done, and what we can do, to advance the causes of social and racial equality in our Company, communities, country and the world. Please use this occasion to pause and reflect on what we can do to combat racism and discrimination in all forms.

Please stay safe and healthy, and as always, your Board deeply appreciates the commitment you share to our collective enterprise and our mission and goals, particularly around our deep commitment to inclusion and diversity.

Happy Juneteenth,

The Bridge Board